

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

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P R 050307Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2559

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 1630

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PGOV, ID

SUBJECT: IR. WIJARSO APPOINTED PERTAMINA CHIEF DURING IBNU'S  
ABSENCE

REF: JAKARTA 1243

1. JANUARY 2 AND 3 EDITIONS OF LOCAL PRESS CARRIED UNUSUAL FRONT  
PAGE REPORT THAT PERTAMINA PRESIDENT-DIRECTOR IBNU SUTOWO HAD  
APPOINTED IR. WIJARSO TO RUN PERTAMINA DURING IBNU'S EXTENDED  
ABSENCE FROM INDONESIA (REFTEL). TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY WAS DONE  
BY POWER OF ATTORNEY EXECUTED BY IBNU ON JANUARY 21, 1976.  
COPIES WERE SENT TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND PERTAMINA BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS. STATEMENT CONTAINED NO DETAILS ABOUT IBNU'S  
WHEREABOUTS NOR DID IT SET ANY TIME LIMIT ON DELEGATION OF  
AUTHORITY. HENCE, WIJARSO, IN ADDITION TO HIS DUTIES AT OIL  
AND GAS DIRECTORATE (MIGAS) IN DEPT. MINES IS NOW RUNNING ENTIRE  
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PERTAMINA OPERATION.

2. GOI SPOKESMAN MASHURI LATER TOLD JOURNALISTS, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT MEANING OF ANNOUNCEMENT, THAT TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY DURING IBNU'S ABSENCE WAS STANDARD PROCEDURE. (MASHURI REVEALED THAT IBNU WOULD BE VACATIONING IN U.S.) EMBOFF QUERIED SENIOR PERTAMINA OFFICIAL (WHO IS CLOSE TO IBNU) AND RECEIVED SAME REPLY THAT TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY WAS JUST "ROUTINE" MATTER. SIMILARLY, PERTAMINA PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT ISSUED FOLLOW-UP STATEMENT CALLING WIJARSO'S ASSUMPTION OF CONTROL "NORMAL PROCEDURE." IN FACT, HOWEVER, IBNU NEVER PUBLICALLY WENT THROUGH THIS TRANSFER OF POWER EXERCISE ON ANY OF HIS PREVIOUS "SPRING VACATIONS."

3. IBNU'S VACATION IS BEING INTERPRETED BY MANY INDONESIANS, IN AND OUT OF PERTAMINA, AS A NEW PHASE IN A PLAN OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S TO EVENTUALLY REPLACE IBNU. THIS SPECULATING HAS BEEN INTENSIFIED BY FRONT PAGE PRESS REPORTS THAT SUHARTO HAS MET WITH BOTH GEN. YUNUS, IBNU'S PREDECESSOR AT P.T. PERTAMIN (PERTAMINA'S EARLIER INCARNATION), AND JULIUS TAHIJA, PRESIDENT OF CALTEX. CONSENSUS NOW IS THAT IBNU WILL GRADUALLY FADE OUT OF PICTURE AND RETIRE, AND THAT SUHARTO IS USING SAME JAVANESE TACTICS ON IBNU AS HE DID WHEN HE REMOVED SUKARNO FROM OFFICE. ONE IMPORTANT SIGN IS THAT IBNU'S SUPPORT AMONG SENIOR GENERALS, INCLUDING MINISTER OF DEFENSE PANGGABEAN, APPEARS TO BE BADLY ERODED.

4. FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES HERE HAVE WELCOMED NEWS OF WIJARSO'S APPOINTMENT. MOST HOPE IT WILL BE PERMANENT. COMPANIES RESPECT HIS COMPETENCY, HONESTY, AND OPEN DOOR POLICY. SEVERAL RESIDENT COMPANY REPS TELL US TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY REALLY FORMALIZES SITUATION THAT HAS BEEN EVOLVING DURING LAST SEVERAL WEEKS. THEY SAY THAT IT IS WIJARSO, NOT IBNU, WHO HAS BEEN CALLING SHOTS ON VARIETY OF OPERATIONAL AND POLICY MATTERS.

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## Message Attributes

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